HISTORY OF THE INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE AGREEMENT

The interviewee has given information to be used in connection with the history of the Intermountain Region, United States Forest Service. The purpose of this project is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of the interview has been made by the interviewer. An original verbatim typescript of the tape will then be made. The tape of the interview and the original verbatim typescript will then be filed in the historical records of the Intermountain Region, currently at Ogden, Utah. These materials will be made available for purposes of research to qualified scholars and for use in courses, scholarly publications, and other related purposes.

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I, F Eugene Powers, have read the above
(Interviewee, please print name)

and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, I knowingly and voluntarily permit the United States Forest Service and others researching the history of the Forest Service, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized, or contemplated, to the Intermountain Region, United States Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.

F E Powers
Interviewee (signature)

Apr 5, 1984
Date

120 Monroe
Salmon, Id

Interviewer (signature)

INTERVIEWEE: F. E. Powers

LOCATION: Home in Salmon

POSITION: Former Supervisor of the Salmon National Forest

INTERVIEWER: Thomas G. Alexander

SUBJECT: Salmon National Forest

DATE: April 5, 1984

TA: Can you tell about how you got started in the Forest Service and about your career?

FP: Well, I--at the time I got interested in Forest Service work, I was on a ranch in Eastern Oregon. I had convinced myself that I wanted to be a dentist. The last year I went in high school why I took the courses I though would be necessary for a School of Dentistry course.

But during that time a dentist by the name of Jones, a good friend of mine did our dental work in Wallowa got to talking to me about denistry as a profession. He dropped a few hints that dentristry might be a little bit out of my line. He got me thinking that using my past experience and background would be logical. I had experience grazing livestock on the forest and working with the Ranger--ranch work

was similar.

So I finally decided to switch my career to forestry. I wanted to be a rancher and a cattle raiser; but I thought that those two brothers wanted to do that, too. So I thought I would be something else.

I got started in forestry at Oregon State. And I worked for the Forest Service one year in Wallowa. And I went to North Idaho during the next two years that I was in college and worked for the Bureau of Plant Industry during that time. The man in charge of the Blister rust program recommended me to the Regional Forester in Region Four who offered me a job.

TA: Yes. What year was that that you came down here to Region Four?

FP: Let's see, 1929.

TA: 1929?

FP: Yes.

TA: Did you start out as a district ranger of how did your career fall?

FP: No. In 1929, I was working during the bark beetle epidemic--lodgepole pine---

TA: Lodge pole.

FP: Lodge pole epidemic in Eastern Idaho. And after that field work was through. during the Winter I went to Odgen on a seasonal appointment at that time. I helped with the bark beetle program for the following year and then, after that, I went through the bark beetle treating season in Eastern Idaho. I passed the Civil Service Exams and was transferred to McCall.

TA: What method of erradication were you using for pine beetles at the time?

FP: We sprayed the bark with gas-oil and set the tree on fire. You would light it and ran it up the trees as far as you could.

TA: Yes.

FP: Where there were limbs all the way up, there were probably bark beetles; we tried to burn them out. We got something like ninety-two or three percent of the bark beetles.

TA: And this was on the Targhee National Forest?

FP: Targhee, yes.

TA: O.K. then, what do you do after you left the Regional Office, you came to McCall, is that what you said?

FP: I was offered the Paddy Flat Ranger District on the Idaho Ntional Forest. I spent the winter at the Regional Office, getting ready for the job of insect

control during the Spring until the 1st of July. And while I was in Ogden, there, I got acquainted with C. N. Woods and other regional men while I was studying for the Junior Forester's Examination during that time. I had already passed the Ranger's Examimination and I was ineligible for appointment through that. But before that occurred, I took this other examination, the Junior Forester's Examination. And I took appointment that way.

TA: Can you tell me what the Ranger Exam and the Junior Forester Exam were like during that period? This would have been then in the early 1930's that you a--

FP: Yes, 29 and 30. Well, the Junior Forester's Examination was a written examination covering your whole course and it was about seven hours long. But the Ranger's examination was a written examination and they asked you practical questions about, oh I remember shoeing horses and packing and roping and things like that you know that they felt the ranger would need to know. But then, they asked some forestry questions, too.

TA: Oh, O.K.

FP: The Junior Forester's was technical entirely all the way through.

TA: And the Ranger's was more practical---

FP: Yes.

TA: Did that include some kinds of demonstrations that you had to do?

FP: It was all written; no demonstrations.

TA: Did you have to throw a diamond hitch on a pack?

FP: No.

TA: I wondered when that had stopped. I knew that that was the first thing--the first kind of exam that they had but the continued down into 1930?

FP: Yes. I remember one question they asked--taken like a question. They would test about how fast a tree grew. And they had a fence that was nailed to the tree six inches high. And they wanted to know how long it would be before the wire got high enough until a ten-inch pig could crawl underneath the wire. (laughter)

TA: How did you answer the question?

FP: Well, I knew that the wires didn't raise.

TA: That's right, yes. (laughter)

FP: It wouldn't at all.

TA: Okey. They meant that, essentially, for a trick question?

FP: Oh, yes.

TA: O.K. then where did you get your first appointment as a Forester?

FP: That was on McCall on the Paddy Flat Ranger District, Idaho National Forest.

TA: Paddy Flat.

FP: Well, I guess maybe I had my appointment before I left the Targhee but it was in process when I was transferred and I went directly to McCall as a Ranger on the Paddy Flat District.

TA: How long were you a Ranger up there on that district?

FP: Five years.

TA: Was that a heavy timber district?

FP: No.

TA: It wasn't.

FP: Mostly fire. There wasn't very much timber. Some small farmer sales and there were five or six bands of sheep.

TA: What kind of condition was the range in up there?

FP: Well, it was generally in pretty good condition. Not as good as I thought it ought to be. I spent my first year examining the range and studying the management plans. When I got through, I went in to to see the Supervisor about making a reduction. And he said, "well, it is not that easy." You could not just examine it and say next year you would have to reduce the sheep. It was a longer process than that to get them down.

TA: What kind of examination did you make? Did you run transects or anything like that?

FP: No. Each band had a management plan allowing so many days per camp depending on estimated capacity. I just, mostly what I knew about range was running stock on the range and I knew what it ought to look like. And I didn't think some of it looked that good. The manual itself tells you when you examine the range well if they left twenty-five percent of it, why, then it was in good shape. But I didn't think that it was quite right. But the supervisor really didn't know too much about what I knew about range either.

TA: He didn't have quite the practical experience you had range a--?

FP: Oh I don't know if he did.

TA: And you remained five years on the--

FP: Paddy Flat District

TA: On the Paddy Flat District. And where did you go from there?

FP: To the Warn (Warren) District, for one year.

TA: Also on the Idaho National Forest?

FP: Yes. And then two years on the New Meadows District. And then I was Fire Staff man for five years after that. And then I came over here as Assistant Supervisor.

TA: What were your duties as Fire Staff Officer on the Payette?

FP: Well, I was in charge of the fire activity on all the districts: hiring guards and lookouts, training, fire protection, trail maintenance, and telephone line and 'phone maintenance. And the last year I was there, we had the first smoke jumper squad that the forest had.

We had two technical jumpers that were--one of them was in charge of the crew and the other one was a packer. And we had five conscientious objecters on the crew; they would rather fight fire with others, jumping, than go to war. And so they came and jumped for us. We trained them and--

TA: Now was that 1939? Was that the first year that you had jumpers over there? What year was that?

FP: 1941 or '42.

TA: '41, yes. For some reason I though it was earlier than that.

FP: Well, they were jumping in Region One before that.

TA: But it would have been '41 before you had smoke jumpers over here on Region Four?

FP: Yes. They were the first smoke jumpers we had.

TA: And that was the beginning of that smoke jumpers crew at McCall.

FP: Yes. They trained them at Missoula, Montana, for a couple of years and then they established the training camp at McCall.

TA: Did you send out quite a few smoke jumping crews on fires?

FP: Oh yes. When we got them we just had them busy all he time, yes.

TA: How did you decide what kind of the fire a smoke jumping crew ought to go too?

FP: Well primarily, it was the time factor if it looked like it was going to be a bad fire in the lookouts reporting spread why we would send those men immediately.

TA: For quick attack on flash fuel?

FP: Yes. We had some techniques of jumping that they would follow after after we got through there. They would a--these jumpers you know would get on a wind; they didn't know what the wind was going to be until he got over the fire but if they were dropping and they were getting out of where the fire ought to be--close to the fire--why then they would turn the chute sideways and fall aways and then spread it out. And they could get closer to the fire that way. The 'chutes they were using had about a five-mile drift. They learned to take advantage of that by turning the 'chute into the wind.

TA: Didn't they develop some new types of chutes that allowed them to control them better with flaps or something.

FP: Well yes, there has been several developed, but the first thing they did was to have them grid. If they were facing the wind, they would just about fall directly to the ground if it was five miles a hour. But they could do that by turning the direction of the flap on the--and that was your first control before it they would go with the 'chutes. And then they would billow out the flaps and--

TA: Did you have anything to do over there with the development of these innovations on the 'chutes?

FP: No.

TA: Other then that then during the fire season you would be involved in deciding where crews ought to go in manning the command post.

FP: The entire force was subject to fire call; no one was allowed a vacation during fire season.

TA: The Idaho National Forest was a pretty heavy fire forest, wasn't it?

FP: Yes. And the year I landed there was 1931 and they haven't had that severe a season since they burnt 106,000 acres, I think, that year.

TA: Most of your fires then were project fires that summer?

FP: Well, they were just one big project fire when I was there. (laughter)

TA: Oh, one big one.

FP: Yes.

TA: You came over here as Assistant Supervisor. What year was that?

FP: In '44.

TA: In 44.

FP: April of '44.

TA: What were the principle activities that were being carried on here on the Salmon National Forest when you came in '44?

FP: Well a--one of the big activities that I had to take care of was trespass, cattle and horse trespass.

TA: O.K.

FP: The Supervisor had two members on his Staff: Fire conrol and Assistant Supervisor. I was the Assistant Supervisor. But Floyd Goden told me told me my first priority was to take care of the trespass.

TA: Was that a severe problem?

FP: Yes, it really was.

TA: How did you go about trying to deal with that problem on the Salmon?

FP: Well, with an impoundment. Preceeding that, we would go out and if we knew whose the stock were, we would go and contact them and tell them their livestock were out. And if they didn't do anything about it, why, we rounded them up and charged them for impounding them.

TA: Did you have them tag stock when they came on the forest or spray the sides or anything like that?

FP: Well, we did some of that, yes. We used some dye.

TA: Yes.

FP: We would dye the stock in some instances.

TA: Use ear tags?

FP: Once in awhile we used some ear tags where it was practical, yes. We got so we knew all the stock and their brands.

TA: Did you do any brushing of the tails of those that weren't allowed to go on? Tnat was done some in other forests.

FP: No. I knew about it, yes

TA: But that wasn't something you did. Were you succesful in reducing the trespass?

FP: Oh yes. We got it all taken care of.

TA: By when did trespass cease to be a problem? About how long did it take you to control that?

FP: Oh, let's see, it was about four or five years I guess.

TA: So it would have been into 1951 maybe 1950 before you had that under control?

FP: Yes.

TA: Okay.

FP: I went out with them; I bought some real good cow horses and went out with a lot of them and helped them round the stock up. Expect each person rounded up five hundred head of horses.

TA: Was the trespass mostly by horses?

FP: Yes. Normal horses more than anything else. See, the whole valley was covered with horses and they did not have a permit for the many of them. The BlM did not have any trespass laws and so we were doing all the trespass work for them. When they were through grazing in the valley, the grass got short and the season was hot so they came up on the forest. And we rounded them up in trespass.

TA: So that the--the BLM hadn't organized grazing districts yet?

FP: Well they had districts; but they had only two or three people working in them. And then they didn't have any laws. They were glad to see us round them up.

TA: Yes, I bet they were. What other things did you do in connection with stock here on the forest?

FP: We did quite a lot of fencing and required the herders to make allotment plans.

TA: O.K.

FP: To what we thought was the capacity.

TA: Did you have crews that would do allotment analysis and that sort of thing?

FP: It wasn't that refined when we started out with but we finally ended up with complete allotment analysis that we used as a criteria for what the--

TA: What systems of allotment analysis did you use here on this forest?

FP: You mean to start with?

TA: No, after you got that somewhat refined.

FP: Well, I guess it is the one everybody uses now. It is a condition and trend complete to carrying capacity and reduction capacity.

TA: Three-step transect?

FP: Yes.

TA: Both a--

FP: Yes. And we had a lot of grazing enclosures that started.

TA: Did you a--what techniques did you use to try to distribute the stock or improve the use of the forage?

FP: Well, of course we tried to get the herders to distribute the stock properly with salt.

TA: Yes.

FP: And then we got to using a rotation system.

TA: Did you have Gus LeMay come out here as a consultant when you did that to develop restoration?

FP: Not directly but his disciples--we used rest rotation methods of management almost universally.

TA: His disciples? (laughter)

FP: Yes.

TA: I know down on the Challis, he came out directly there on. But you had some of his students?

FP: Yes, you bet, we had a lot of his students. (laughter)

TA: Showed you how to do rest rotation. How well did that work?

FP: It worked real well. You bet it did, it is a--in a far off country like this particularly it worked good.

TA: By when would you say that your grazing situation was in fairly good shape so that your allotments were where you think they ought to have been?

FP: Well I don't think they are quite there yet. I think the last grazing people were a little too optimistic. And I don't think they are all down to where they ought to be right now. And right now they are not doing much work on it. Too many people trying to control the forces, funds.

TA: Did you do other kinds of improvements besides the salting that is--water developments and things of that sort?

FP: Oh yes. We did a lot of water development and fencing and seeding.

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TA: Any reseeding projects--that sort of thing?

FP: Yes, we had quite a few of those on the foothills where it was--

TA: What about watershed improvements, what kinds of things did you do in that area?

FP: Well I guess other than the seeding--that is about all we that we did.

TA: So you weren't involved in any kind of drastic sort things; they way they were down on they were down on the Wasatch Front in Utah or anything.

FP: No.

TA: Nothing like that?

FP: No. Our biggest watershed problem was Dump Creek. You have probably heard about that.

TA: Yes, I saw that today. (laughter)

FP: Yes. That was probably the biggest watershed problem in the region.

TA: What did you try to do with that?

FP: Well, we started to put the water over into the channel it is in now, see.

TA: The one that it was suppose to be in?

FP: Yes, that is--

TA: Moose Creek.

FP: Moose Creek--Little Moose Creek, yes.

TA: And that was done while you were Assistant Supervisor or while you were Supervisor, which?

FP: Well, we didn't get it entirely moved until after I had retired. But they are working on it and finally got the money to do that.

TA: So that it wasn't going down Dump Creek into the Salmon?

FP: Yes, right. But we had it all ready to go and the money allotted to it. And we had an expert come over and look at it and he told us that the water never did run down the Moose Creek like we said it did. And so then we had to start all over again and prove to him that Dump Creek was not the original channel.

Dick Plum, who was a mining engineer here, found a report the changing of that channel to Dump Creek in the mining journals--this report was in the mining journal. And that was what cinched the thing.

TA: What was the reason for the changing of the water over into Dump Creek? Was that hydrolic mining or what?

FP: You mean changing down to Dump Creek. Oh, yes. McNut was a mining man who built the tunnel to Moose Creek that caused it to run down Dump Creek and it was erosive soil so it just washed it right on out--just an old lake bed. If you go over there you can see two or three hundred foot falls where that dropped off into the--and if you started to walk down Dump Creek from the top you couldn't get out

until you got to the foot of it. It was so vertical.

TA: Yes, I mean you can see from the road there that it is a real problem.

FP: Yes, I should say.

TA: What was your timber situation like during the time that your were Assistant Supervisor?

FP: Well, when we first came here, about all the timbering that was done was two or three small mills that were selling lumber to the war effort. It was not long after that, though, that they got to be competing for the sales. And then, we were getting up to pretty close to what we shouldn't be cutting.

TA: By 1950?

FP: Yes.

TA: What was the allowable cut by 1950 that were--?

FP: Well, we thought it was about thirty-five million. I don't know what they call it now.

TA: Did you have it up that high then?

FP: Yes, that is what we called it and we didn't cut that much regularly.

TA: Well, how much were you actually cutting/

FP: Maybe twenty-five.

TA: So you were about ten million under what you considered to be your allowable cut.

FP: Yes.

TA: What species was cut--most of it?

FP: Douglas Fir mostly; some Ponderosa pine and some spruce.

TA: Douglas Fir.

FP: Yes.

TA: Some Ponderosa or a--?

FP: Oh yes, quite a lot of Ponderosa available along the Salmon River itself on the South Fork or the North Fork.

TA: What methods were the operators using to get that out--mostly a--

FP: Well they used some high lead logging to get some of it out in rough country.

And we knew then that we couldn't cut thirty-five million without some helicopter method or high lead or something like that. It is too steep and too much granite to handle it without some means that we didn't have access to.

TA: So what about jamming or tractor skidding to you allow that in some of those areas?

FP: Some of it we didn't, yes--on the milder slopes.

TA: Did you have any problems that resulted from the logging in some areas?

FP: Well, about the only problem that I can quickly recall is over on Silver Creek, the soil was volcanic ash type of soil and if you didn't log really carefully, you get sserious erosion. It was really tough to handle.

TA: Were you successful at handling it properly?

FP: Well, yes. We went and ditched it and drained it properly; I don't think that there is any bad gully there now. But we had to get right at it and do something about because it was real bad, you know, alluvial. And the roads themselves, right down the regular road, you couldn't get down them because that silty type of ground just wouldn't stand water.

TA: Did any of the roads on the areas that were cut-over start to deteriorate before you were able to get at them?

FP: It started but we were able to correct it. That is about all.

TA: And then you would move in on them next Spring and undertake watershed conservation work.

FP: Yes. And then after we had that one big wash, why we didn't cut them--cut the Lodge or the the Poderosa Pine back in there for a long time after that. We didn't know how to handle the darn thing. We thought we almost lost it so we were real careful with it.

TA: But it would have taken what--some cable systems or something--helicopter logging to handle that area.

FP: Yes. That is what we thought. I would not log it until they had some good safe roads--helicopters or some method like that.

TA: Essentially what you did then was put a moratorium on the logging in that area.

FP: Yes. And that country is a nice logging area to look at it--smooth and-- you know what it is like there.

TA: You said Silver Leak; did you mean Silver Creek?

FP: Yes, Silver Creek.

: Over on Kamas, yes O.K.

FP: Yes, the head waters here of Kamas there.

: Yes.

TA: But the soil is just too fragile.

FP: Yes.

TA: What year was it that you put the moratorium on logging in that area?

FP: Well, I would have to guess but that must have been '55, maybe.

TA: '55, Were you already supervisor at that time? When did you become--

FP: No, I think that was what--'59 when I became Supervisor.

: The think the records show '61.

FP: Is it, yes.

TA: O.K. so you were Assistant Supervisor there at that time.

FP: Yes.

TA: What about your situation with recreation on the forest during the time you

were Assistant Supervisor and Supervisor. What happened in that area?

FP: Well, I--part of the things that happened was that Middle Fork, it got pretty well covered with cans and we couldn't get people to pick up what they left and that sort of thing. And we finally got them doing it themselves and being responsible to each other for cleaning up. And that really worked good, when we started doing that.

TA: Yes.

FP: As long as we were running the river and picking up all their cans why that was fine; but they really did get down to it until we told them it was their fault. And they were the ones who were scattering it and they realized they were and they were really doing good. I think they are still doing good there with that sort of thing. But we don't--we haven't got people to do that other places except the Middle Fork and maybe the main Salmon River. They still have to be picked up after.

TA: Let me see. When did you retire as Supervisor?

FP: '70.

TA: '70. So the River of No Return area hadn't been created; but the Idaho Wilderness area was all ready in.

FP: No, but it--most of the traffic down the main Salmon was recreation and boating. Same people--a lot--that went down the main Salmon as went down the Middle

Fork.

TA: Yes. What ways did you use to try to deal with the problems created by all that boating--because that must have been increased tremendously during the time that you were here from 1944 on.

FP: Yes--oh yes, it was. And we--actually controlling the amount of use really was just talked of. We knew that we were going to have to deal with it pretty soon but by the time I quit as Supervisor, why, they were just about going when they wanted to go.

TA: So, really, you had no control by 1970?

FP: No.

TA: And what you were doing was trying to control trash by having people take their stuff out? Any other things you did to try to deal with the impact of those boaters and campers in that area?

FP: Well, I think--yes we had boat patrols checking with commercial traffic to determine that the saturation point would be.

TA: And then limiting the number of special-use permits on that basis.

FP: Yes.

TA: How many boaters--commercial boaters would you have on there in a year generally--would you issue permits for?

FP: I can't remember figures now but--

TA: But you were trying to regulate things like that at that time.

FP: Yes.

TA: When did you begin seriously attempting to regulate in that way? When did it get to be such a problem that you had to I guess?

FP: Well, it wasn't long before I quit being Supervisor that a--

TA: Sometime in the mid '60's then, maybe?

FP: Yes, I suppose, yes.

TA: Were there any other particularly significant recreation problems that you had to deal with?

FP: I think that was the main one--excepting fishing on the Main Salmon River got to be such a problem that we had to regulate the number of campers that would--you could handle during the--and we did that by a fifteen-day period-- after they had been there fifteen days, you had to move on or get out. We did that for several years before I retired.

TA: Was that successful?

FP: Oh, yes.

TA: Did you have quite a few camps on the forest that fell under the Land and Water Recreation Fund Programs where you had to collect fees and that sort of thing?

FP: No. But we had some problems with mining claims. But we went through that classification.

TA: After the passage of the Multiple Use Mining Act in 1955?

FP: Yes, '55 or '56, yes. And we were the "guinea pig" forest that took that up right immediately after it passed the hearing in Denver--why we started doing that.

TA: You want to tell me what you did here in that connection?

FP: Well, we had a mining engineer that would go through and classify all the mining claims--valid mining claims. And if they were valid--if he found enough gold or minerals so that they could patent it, why he told them that they had a valid claim and they could do what they wanted to do with it. But there weren't too many of them.

TA: O.K. now--go ahead I am sorry I didn't mean to cut you off.

FP: O.K. well, when they found out that they couldn't hold them, just-- generally, most of them dropped them. But there were a few of them that hung on because they thought maybe it was valid enough to patent. But we sure got a lot of mining claims in our labs then to--

TA: Did you have any appeals from the decisions of your mining engineer?

FP: I don't think we have one, no.

TA: On those cases where he determined that the a--they were patentable did those people also gain ownership of the surface resource as well?

FP: If they patented them, yes.

TA: Yes.

FP: They would, yes.

TA: Where they patented.

FP: Yes.

TA: Otherwise they had to let you manage the surface?

FP: Yes. And we did--a lot of those that were living on the mining claims down the Salmon River and other places and that was their home, then we gave them a twenty

year moritorium to live there and then if they still have a patented claim, they lost it. And we had some appeals there when we started to move in and move their homes off--sort of thing.

TA: Were there quite a few that were living on unpatented mining claims?

FP: Yes, you bet. Down the Salmon River there were quite a few, yes.

TA: How would you deal with that problem after you went and told them that they couldn't--in your view, they couldn't patent it then. What would they do?

FP: Yes, we told them that the mining engineer in his examination showed that they didn't have mineral enough to patent. But if they later found a vein or if they opened up a vein to show, expose things like that why you would come back and examine them again. And then, as a last resort, quite a few of them would take special-use on their mining claim to live on for twenty years or until they wanted to drop it.

TA: What did you do after the special-use was up?

FP: We took possession--unless they had the mineral showing. But the mining engineer would have to find valid mineral for them to prove up on.

TA: Did you require them to remove their improvements then?

FP: Well, not necessarily. We moved quite a few of them out ourselves.

TA: But you didn't ask the people who--in a sense, you have got trespass if they leave them there, don't they.

FP: Yes.

TA: But generally you didn't expect them to remove them?

FP: No. In a few cases we burned them--just a bunch of out-buildings, you know.

TA: Uh huh. Were there any other mining problems that you had there? Do you have many leasable minerals on this forest?

FP: No. There is a place or two up in Lenore District that is under lease.

TA: Phosphate?

FP: Yes.

TA: Yes.

FP: One or two places up there that they have filed on but I don't think there are any of them which have ever been mined.

TA: But there were leases issued on some of those.

FP: Yes.

TA: Everything else, though, besides phosphate leases would be locatable minerals.

FP: Yes.

TA: And most of that mining activity that caused you problems was along the Salmon?

FP: Yes.

TA: Did you have any problems in any other areas particularly?

FP: Oh yes, well; at Leadore, there would be some. There might still be claims out there that they are holding up during their annual assessment work.

TA: Uh huh.

FP: Just primarly where they are--around Leodore.

TA: What about Colbalt--those?

FP: Yes, those are patented. Most of them are patented the basic mining operator there.

TA: Did you have any problems since in some of those areas the patents would be surrounded by forest land--did you have any problems in dealing with the operators

at all?

FP: No, we didn't but we had some mining problems with Colbalt--killed the fish in the main river with chemicals.

TA: Now, I have heard about that. And I have heard several different stories in connection with it. Can you tell me essentially what happened there?

FP: Well, a I guess part of it is just too much mineral in the stream--more than we thought would be there or the Salmon to live in.

TA: Leaching out from tailing ponds and that sort of thing or what?

FP: Yes, they had a big deep tailings pond that ran over and down into the stream.

TA: Okey.

FP: But the one big Salmon kill was a dump of acid that went into the stream and killed Salmon in the stream. Two hundred or so you could see lying around on the bank. I don't know whether that was an accident or whether it a--

TA: Did you issue any citations in those cases?

FP: Well, I am not sure. The Fish and Game people did I think.

TA: The State?

FP: Yes, they examined them themselves.

TA: Yes, okey--because the Wildlife Resource belonged to them where you were managing the surface there.

FA: Yes.

TA: Any other things with regard to mining that I ought to know about?

FA: I can't think of anything.

TA: About when was this problem that you had at Colbalt? Can you tell me about what years or in the middle of what decade?

FA: Oh yes, that was around '55 or '56, along in that time sometime.

TA: Okey. That was when--

FA: That was about when they quit mining there.

TA: So it was near the end of their operation.

FA: Yes. And of course the leaching of their cuts and fills that they opened up while they were still mining are still draining into the stream.

TA: Yes.

FA: They opened it up and I suppose they are still either putting them in settling ponds or else it is going into the stream themselves. And there is some coming out of the tunnels too--some of the minerals that they opened up while they were mining the tunnels. It leached out and came down the stream.

TA: What about the situation with wildlife on the forest during that period. Were there any particular developments that you know of in that area?

FA: Well, it was there for quite a period of time. The Game Department figured that we should retire the regular season for hunting. They thought shortage of game to hunt resulted from a kill of deer and elk. And I don't know why that occurred but they started cutting back on the seasons and allowing only a buck or bull season. I think maybe it is building up a little bit now. But that is probably the game or a feed availability more than anything.

TA: When was that when they began cutting that season back?

FA: Oh that must have been about '65.

TA: About five years before you retired?

FA: Yes.

TA: Did you undertake or have any surveys of wildlife on the forest during the time

you were--?

FA: Oh, yes. Well, we made some big surveys during the Winter of '48 and '49--real hard winter when the game animals were all down in the foothills. So we did a lot of counting, then, with deer and elk.

TA: Was that the one the Art Buckingham was involved in?

FA: No that was before that--about 1938. He was on the Middle Fork doing a study there in in wood.

TA: Yes.

FA: Came up there.

TA: Do you know when that was?

FA: Oh, that must have been '42 or '43.

TA: A year before you came then?

FA: Yes.

TA: What was the big study that was done later, though, the one you were mentioning?

FA: Oh, that we--the counting that we did?

TA: Yes.

FA: Yes, that was in '48 and '49 that we made those counts.

TA: What did you determine from that?

FA: Well we pretty much--we figured--we counted most of the game we had; we knew what we came through the winter with--well that was the--count we ever had.

TA: Uh huh.

FA: Food was getting a little scarce you know. Particularly on the North Fork when they had sheep running in that country. Sagebrush and low feed was available that the sheep grazing would just perpetrate that sort of thing. But when we cut down on the sheep, then the sagebrush was crowded out by perenial grasses favoring elk rather than deer. So it was actually turning into an elk pasture instead of deer pasture.

TA: Did you find any places that you had significant conflict between cattle and elk on the ranges?

FP: No, I don't think we did. But a--

TA: They were eating essentially the same thing, basically.

FP: Yes. But the thing about our elk is they spend spring, summer, and fall on the Salmon and winter in Montana. So we had kind of a Summer range here for the elk.

TA: Yes, of course the cattle would be on the range in the summer, too.

FP: Yes, but that country down there is a pretty rough for cattle.

TA: Did you do any fish habitat improvement during that period?

FP: No.

TA: Let see--go ahead.

FP: The Game Department was doing quite a lot of fish habitat planning and improving. They had fish hatcheries. And then they go down on the Columbia River with their problems. I guess they are doing something pretty good right now with the Steelhead runs. And they themselves are hoping to do something with the Salmon so they can improve their runs.

TA: Let's see we have talked about grazing, timber, recreation, mining, and watershed improvements. Were there any particularly significant developments in administration on the forest during the time that you were Assistant Supervisor or Supervisor that you can think of.

FP: Well, probably fire administrations. During the period of 1931, they really

determined that we weren't taking good action as we should at the time. There were too many fires that were getting away from us; the transportation of fire fighters was too slow. With the development of the use of smoke-jumpers and use of helicopters, this was speeded up.

TA: Uh huh.

FP: So then the Forest Service themselves set up rules that were mandatory. You had to stay on a small fire twenty-four hours after the last smoke was seen or on a larger fire, you were required to stay five days after the laassst smoke was seen. When you were called to a fire, you had to start immediately, not in the morning. You had to do these things in order to meet the demands, see. That was in 1935 that they had a lot of these musts.

And there were a lot of change in the habits of the fire fighters from then on, when they had the mandatory rules. And "Reed and Run" was doing the same thing: stressing action. And that was when when fire control was first priority; all personnel were available for fire fighting.

TA: And that directive was in 1935.

FP: Yes. There is a fire control manual that you may have a copy of but that was the guiding angel for a long time.

TA: What other developments took place in the field of fire management--fire fighting, that you remember during the time of your career?

FP: Well, about that time--about 1931, they started dropping cargo from an airplane and that kept. Every year they kept doing a little more air transportation. They dropped by parachute. At first they started dropping cargo with sack--wool sack parachutes. And then they got 'chutes; from the army they got condemned men 'chutes that they finally used entirely to drop cargo--drop all sorts of cargo.

TA: When did that become significant, dropping the cargo?

FP: It was about '31 when they started dropping cargo at all. In about two or three years, we were droping all kinds of cargo. And it was so successful that we would move camps by parachute.

TA: Were you using helicopter attack crews on forest here during the time you were Supervisor?

FP: Yes.

TA: When did those start being used?

FP: Oh, it must have been about '60, I guess.

TA: About ten years before you retired?

FP: Yes, and at the same time, they had retardant planes that were here every year

on contract to drop retardants. And then, theie procedure for a quick- acting fire was to drop retardants on the fire and then have the helicopter immediately available to attack the fire while it was small.

TA: When did you start dropping the retardants? Was it about the same time?

FP: Well, a little before the helicopter got to be active, anyway.

TA: So the early '60s, sometime?

FP: Yes, may have been, yes.

TA: Okey.

FP: I believe that, at first, we used a helicopter and the jump squad. And then it got so we didn't use the jump squad nearly as much as the helicopters that were locally based and gave access to the fire.

TA: And those around are contract, I guess---

FP: Yes. In and retardant planning.

TA: Both.

FP: Yes.

TA: Okey, any other significant changes that you can think of in administrative procedures?

FP: Well, I can't think of any major ones.

TA: Now, you were Forest Supervisor when the new office was opened here. Was that--

FP: No, it was open there before there. While I was still in the old office we build this office here. I don't remember what date it was we moved but I was Supervisor in the old office for awhile.

TA: Before you moved to the new one.

FP: Yes.

TA: What about telephone systems on the forest; did they change very much while you were Supervisor?

FP: Well, they changed from telephone to radio pretty much while---

TA: You did. When does that change over take place?

FP: Oh, started in about '40, '41. They started going to SBF radios. Than they got to be--have a more portable type. And then they got to be so you would have to see from one phone to another in order to move. I mean to a telephone.

TA: FM systems?

FP: Yes.

TA: Yes. When did---

FP: 1960. But that portable SPF radio was the one that really got us in the radio business when that got popular--only weighed seventeen pounds and you could pack it on your back.

TA: Was it very reliable?

FP: Very reliable. You could almost always get out when you wanted to.

TA: When was that introduced?

FP: The SPF?

TA: Yes.

FP: Well, I don't know what year but it must been about '40, '41.

TA: The portable one?

FP: Yes.

TA: About 1940.

FP: Yes.

TA: O.K. and they replaced telephones to a great extent.

FP: Yes. We would run a temporary line to our camps whenever we could.

: Fire camps you mean?

FP: Yes. Temporary lines were hard to keep up.

TA: What about administrative staff? Did the size of the staff or makeup or complexity change much during the time that you were here as Assistant?

FP: Oh yes, gradually. When I came here, as I said, there was one other staff besides myself.

TA: This Assistant Supervisor, yourself and then one other staff person.

FP: And the other staff person was a fire control.

TA: And then how did that change over time?

FP: As we took action on more activities, the staff grew: timber, grazing,

engineer, recreation, wildlife---

TA: Yes. But that gradually changed over the time that you were Assistant Supervisor and Supervisor.

FP: Yes.

TA: Do you think you were more affective with the larger staff in fulfilling your mission?

FP: Yes.

TA: Yes. When did you begin having a significantly large engineering staff that did that professionally for you?

FP: Oh let's see, that was about when we surveyed the Pateak Great Road. That was about '55, I guess, we had the first engineer there.

TA: Did you have road crews, engineers and so forth come out of the Regional Office to work on your forest during the year because--?

FP: We did part of the time. I know we had a survey crew that came out with the head boss and he tried to survey roads from Ogden and that certainly wasn't satisfactory.

TA: Yes.

FP: I know we sent--the boss and the road crew went out and worked half the summer and then we found out it wasn't any good. We sent them back and I laid the road out. But you need to have the crew on the forest in order to get it to work right.

TA: Where was that road?

FP: Pateak Creek. Agency Creek and Pateak Creek.

TA: Where is that located?

FP: Oh, let's see, do you know where the Marlin Fort there?

TA: Yes.

FP: Well, it is right back of that. Back up the hillside there.

TA: Up above Lemhime.

FP: Well, do you know where Agency Creek is?

TA: I guess--

FP: Our big main drainage.

TA: No, I don't know where it is.

FP: Well, its--it runs around a east and west until it gets to the Continental Divide and then it turns back south to Agency Creek. There was a lot of lodge-pole timber in that country that the farmers have been wanting to get at--cut a little lumber and the wood and then open that up.

TA: But the surveys that were done by the Regional Office crew weren't satisfactory?

FP: No. The reason they weren't satisfactory is because they got lost up in that country and we didn't supervise them enough probably to--and we got to get them back on the trail--it was hard country to get around in.

TA: Yes. They didn't know the country then.

FP: No. Their engineering was good but in the wrong place.

TA: Are there any other things that I ought to know about your career as Assistant Supervisor and Forest Supervisor here on Salmon National Forest?

FP: Well there is a lot of things that happened if you read that book--the history.

TA: Yes, well I'm interested in your own personal insights into it. Not what she has to say about it.

FP: Oh, she did a lot of research that I didn't know anything about--I mean

background that she dug up and history and contacting the old-timers and that sort of thing. She did most of that.

TA: Do you have any questions that you want to ask, Ken?

KEN: Yes, I have a few. You said that you were at McCall the first year they had jumpers there. You said they hired two jumpers plus they had five conscientious objectors.

FP: Yes.

KEN: So you had about seven jumpers there the first year.

FP: Yes.

KEN: Then after that, you added more every year or how did that work?

FP: Well, yes. It was about the time I left there that they built a jumping loft at McCall and did their own training.

KEN: What kind of plane did they use for the first jump plane?

FP: A Travelair---

KEN: Was that under contract or was that a Forest Service plane?

FP: It was under contract with Johnson Flying Service.

KEN: Out of McCall, was he?

FP: No, he was Johnson Flying Service from Missouri; he is the one who did our flying. After the jumper project increased, DC-3 planes were used.

KEN: Yes.

FP: We had the Travelair that we flew with.

KEN: Yes. How many jumpers could they put in the plane?

FP: Three.

KEN: Did they use a jump-master then?

FP: Yes. I was a jump-master.

KEN: And they had a pilot and you and then the jumpers?

FP: Yes.

KEN: Did they use a--what do they call it, a cord-line--the use a--

FP: Static line.

KEN: Static line; they use that then?

FP: Oh, yes.

KEN :And then you talked about the cattle on trespass here. Where did you have the major problems on the forest with trespass?

FP: Well, the main problems we had were with horses up and down the Limhi River.

KEN: Yes.

FP: And some down in the lower pasture district, some wild horses there that had run out so long--they looked like wild horses--long tails and manes and you could just see their mane going over the hill. That is as close as you get to them. There was about fifty of those.

KEN: How did they get started there?

FP: Oh, people just left them out. And they could winter without hay--kind of hard to catch them after they run out a year or two. You know Mike Wilkens had about fifty head of Morgans running out there until we got after him and rounded them up and booted them out of there. The wild horses were on Panther Creek.

KEN: Yes. So he caught them up and moved them out. You didn't have to trespass his horses.

FP: No.

KEN: Yes. Did any horses have to be shot in the Clear Creek area then?

FP: Yes. There was a closing order which allowed us to dispose of them.

KEN: Yes. There is a corral up on the Gant Ridge trail with wings which made a trap. Have you been to Brush Creek on the other side of the Middle Fork?

FP: Yes.

KEN: Have you seen this cabin up there where the South Fork is?

FP: South Fork to what?

KEN: Southbrush Creek where the two forks come together.

FP: Yes.

KEN: There's a sign there. Years ago I saw it; it said Horsethief Cabin. Did you know anything about it, how that cabin got its name?

FP: I don't know how it got its name. I know where it is.

KEN: Okey. It is a Forest Service made sign--redwood sign.

FP: I don't know how it got the name.

KEN: I understand that someone was catching horses--stealing horses somewhere and that is where they stayed over night there--to take them over to Thunder Mountain.

FP: That would make a good story.

KEN: Yes. I can't find much on that. Did the Forest Service ever "salt game" on the Forest Service or was that the Fish and Game?

FP: Yes.

KEN: When did they discontinue that practice?

FP: Oh, it was after I came over here. The Game Department made the study indicating that game didn't need the salt so they immediately stopped it.

KEN: About when was that?

FP: Oh, I imagine about '45 or such a time.

KEN: Yes.

FP: And the fall of the year, we used to haul whole pack string loads of salt out to the game.

KEN: Yes.

FP: The Games Department furnished the salt.

KEN: You said that in the timber industry, they had to start competing for timber sales. Up until that, were they sold on what they call a green-sheet or a ranger sale?

FP: Yes. More than anything else.

KEN: How large could a ranger sale be?

FP: Oh I don't know.

KEN: Wasn't any limit?

FP: Small sales.

KEN: Wasn't any limit on the size then?

FP: Well, I am sure there was a limit but I don't think they were close to it at the time.

KEN: Yes. When did they start competing for or bidding on timber sales here?

FP: Oh, that was right after the War.

KEN: Yes.

FP: More people got interested in it. Murray Crooke was one of the first sawmill operators and then Smith had a sawmill on--let's see, he was on Spring Creek, I guess. He cut timber during the War and I don't know how he got his timber. It was marked for cutting.

KEN: Were they doing any dredging up at Lee's Berge when you were here?

FP: No, I don't think they were when I was here. They were doing some dredging on Moose Creek after I came here. And that dredge came from Warren, Idaho. Smith Brothers dredged on the North Fork in 1944.

KEN: Oh. Do you remember when they started up the tanker pit at the airport? Did that start up when you were here?

FP: Oh, yes. For quite a while before I left, they were mixing slurry.

KEN: What kind of plane did they first start out to use for the fire retardant drop?

FP: Oh, they were those BTM tankers.

KEN: TBM's were they?

FP: Yes, TBM's.

KEN: I guess that is all I have.

TA: O.K. well thank you very much. I appreciate the time that you have been willing to spend with us--the information, it was very good.

FP: Well, it has been interesting visiting with you.

END OF TAPE